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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (09/30): American Role in Peace
Process is in Serious Question

Main Stories:

Lead UN investigator into the Gaza conflict Richard Goldstone's recommendation that his report be referred to the International Criminal Court receives highlighted coverage in all dailies. Leading with the story, both Al-Quds and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida quote Goldstone in their headlines saying that a "culture of impunity" in the region has to stop. Other related front-page stories report on Palestinian families' attempt to have Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak arrested in London for war crimes. Al-Ayyam reports that Barak's diplomatic immunity shielded him from being arrested during his short visit to the UK.

"[Palestinian] Officials in Washington today and tomorrow indicate the possibility of the resumption of negotiations next month" is the lead headline in Al-Ayyam. Quoting unnamed Palestinian sources, the article states that "in light of the retreating American position on settlements," the meetings that are scheduled to take place between Israeli and Palestinian delegations with Special Envoy George Mitchell will indicate whether or not the two sides are ready to resume negotiations in the coming weeks. Al-Ayyam quotes Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad saying that the Palestinian Authority rejects Israel's attempt to exclude Jerusalem from the ongoing negotiations.

Al-Ayyam quotes Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyya confirming that Hamas will sign a reconciliation agreement with Fatah by mid-October, the result of which should end the internal Palestinian division. Al-Quds reports that the Palestinian factions are satisfied with Hamas's position on Egypt's plan to end the internal division. Reports also note that Egypt suggested that Palestinian elections be held on June 25, 2010.

Citing Israeli daily Ma'ariv, Al-Quds reports on a document that was passed on to Secretary of State Hilary Clinton by former Secretary Condoleezza Rice outlining the US plan to end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the 1967 borders.

BLOCK QUOTES:

¶1. Hamada Fara'neh commented in independent Al-Ayyam under the headline, "Reaching a settlement without a third party" (9/30): "It is not the first time that the US failed to forge an agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis, especially in regards to the final status issues ... It was unsuccessful in reaching an agreement at Camp David in July 2000. The negotiators left without an agreement or resolution, and history recorded it as a failure to make any progress toward ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Bush administration also failed to carry out its own plans launched in Annapolis. The only tangible agreement that was ever reached between the two sides took place only when the sides were themselves convinced it was a good idea and without any intervention from a third party."

¶2. Independent Al-Quds ran an op-ed by Sa'ad Mahyo entitled, "America and the Middle East: A dangerous crossroad" (9/30): "There is a real crisis of an unprecedented American failure. Ever since the US gained power in the region in the aftermath of the Suez War of 1956 ... the US has neither been able to win its wars in the region, nor make peace in it. The question here is: can the US afford to lose the Middle East? The quick and obvious answer is

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absolutely not. In fact, the US is now facing a battle of life or death, especially as it relates to its world leadership."

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